



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, February 27, 2006

CONTACT: Stephen Hourahan
202-224-6167

CHAFEE SUPPORTS RENEWABLE WIND ENERGY PROJECT

*Energy Project is "Very Valuable to Rhode Island and to
Greater New England"*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, **U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI)** sent a letter to four Senate colleagues urging them to reject a proposal to impose a 1.5-nautical mile restrictive zone on offshore energy production. The addition of this provision in the Coast Guard reauthorization bill would essentially terminate an ongoing pollution-free, renewable wind energy project off the coast of New England.

The following is the text of the letter sent to Senators Ted Stevens (R-AK), and Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science And Transportation (CST), as well as to Senators Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Chairman and Ranking Member CST's Subcommittee on Fisheries and the Coast Guard. All four Senators are members of the Coast Guard Reauthorization Conference Committee, which is tasked with reconciling the differences between the Senate and House versions of the reauthorization legislation:

Dear Senators:

I urge you, as members of Coast Guard Reauthorization Conference Committee, to reject the proposed language that would impose a 1.5-nautical mile restrictive zone on offshore energy production. This provision, if added, will be devastating to an ongoing renewable wind energy project that is very valuable to Rhode Island and to greater New England. I encourage you instead to address concerns about maritime navigational safety in future legislation.

With the recent increase in conventional energy prices, wind energy generation is a promising option to provide much needed electricity supply to the New England transmission grid. Additional renewable electricity supply is crucial as providers strive to

maintain reliable electric service at reasonable costs to consumers, while meeting incrementally rising renewable portfolio standards (RPS). Rhode Island raised its RPS to 16 percent of retail sales by the end of 2019. The project will provide up to 450 megawatts of renewable electricity generation annually, enough to meet the demands of Cape Cod and the islands, and thereby reducing strain on the grid and subsequently reducing electricity cost in surrounding areas.

Indeed, the addition of offshore wind energy for New England will not only yield an increase in supply, but will also improve air quality. Wind energy is a non-polluting, clean energy that will reduce greenhouse gas and other air pollutant emissions across New England. Initial reports, comparing traditional fossil fuel electricity generation to wind generation, estimate that the project will eliminate approximately 880,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions in New England. Carbon dioxide is considered the number one greenhouse gas contributing to global warming.

Finally, it has been proposed that the project's assembly and staging area would be located in Rhode Island at the Quonset Business Park. This phase of the project would create 600 to 1,000 jobs and spur new economic development opportunities for the state and region.

I urge that the proposed language be deleted from the final legislation and instead be debated in an open process at a future time.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

###